

1 visit reports, but we don't know how many.

2 The Veteran satisfaction survey, the
3 SHEP survey is very reliable. It's the same
4 type of survey that the private sector uses
5 with their HCAHPS survey. They are Veteran --
6 they are patient satisfaction surveys that CMS
7 requires. So, we'll have a comparison with
8 private sector.

9 And, that covers the entire nation
10 and all eras of Veterans that give you -- that
11 have accessed mental health care in VA.

12 So, I think that's a really valuable
13 source of information.

14 So, it depends on the population of
15 interest. Then we have other research studies
16 and I -- Paul Schnurr was instrumental in
17 collecting the surveys and questionnaires that
18 have been done by the National Center for PTSD.
19 So, those would be focused on PTSD.

20 So, we've got these niche issues,
21 some are small surveys, some are large and
22 broad. But, there isn't a single or a

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1 combination of these surveys that actually
2 helps us with each and every one of our
3 charges.

4 DR. MAGUEN: That's really helpful.

5 I have just a quick question that
6 may or may not be possible. But, the VSS
7 survey that's already happening, is it possible
8 to add questions to that? No? Okay, that was
9 one thought. That would have been lovely. So,
10 that would have been an easy way for us to --

11 DR. MURPHY: Well, I don't think so.
12 We can ask that --

13 CHAIR LEINENKUGEL: What is that
14 survey?

15 DR. MURPHY: -- specifically.

16 DR. MAGUEN: So, it's a survey
17 that's already being done by the VA and would
18 reach the people -- a lot of the people that we
19 want to reach and specifically, if we add some
20 CIH questions, that would, you know, prevent us
21 from having to go through the whole Paperwork
22 Act because it's already happening.

1 DR. MURPHY: So, remember, that OMB
2 -- every time you add a question, they want to
3 re-review it. So, that triggers the Paperwork
4 Reduction Act also.

5 DR. MAGUEN: Oh, it does? Okay.

6 DR. MURPHY: Yes, unfortunately.

7 CHAIR LEINENKUGEL: We're going to -
8 - I'll give you my opinion on all of this.
9 We're going to battle OMB. Okay?

10 This is a very important Commission.
11 Everybody on The Hill realizes that, the
12 President realizes that, SVAC realizes that,
13 HVAC realizes that. Everybody in this room
14 came in as Commissioners realizes that.

15 One of the things that we want to do
16 is streamline and modernize this government.
17 And, if you're going to have hurdles and
18 barriers such as OMB saying that this is a very
19 important Commission, but we are going to delay
20 you for 18 months while you go through the
21 hurdles.

22 We need to stop that, or, at the

1 very least, as a Commission, make a
2 recommendation that OMB, in this case, should,
3 at the minimum, expedite our requests. That's
4 first and foremost.

5 Secondly, is I think that this is
6 the right approach right here. Before we jump
7 that shark, take a deep breath this afternoon,
8 we'll make some assignments that Tom and I will
9 agree to and, seeing that you have the survey,
10 I will help out with that as well because I
11 have strong opinions on this, as I'm already
12 stating.

13 But, we need to understand what
14 those existing gaps are because we have a
15 charge, as easy as it was when they wrote the
16 bill to put that in, we know how difficult it's
17 going to be to obtain the necessary information
18 as requested.

19 Probably more so for those Veterans
20 that are outside the VA, without question.
21 Right?

22 So, that will be the biggest hurdle

1 that we will discuss. Because, I and everyone
2 that has spoken as Commissioners, realize that
3 there's a gap that exists with connecting to
4 all Veterans, Right, and obtaining their
5 feedback on their health care and, certainly,
6 mental health care.

7 And, there's the large group of
8 Veterans that don't receive care.

9 I don't have a clue today how to
10 reach all of them, but we need to either source
11 that out. We have the capability and the
12 budget to do that, bring in experts and list
13 consultants to at least help us jump the shark.
14 Right?

15 So, I think that will be, use what
16 Fran is presenting here, let's understand the
17 existing gaps. Let's evaluate those gaps and
18 then choose an approach which may or may not
19 be up there right now. We may build our own
20 approach based on what I just said.

21 And, is it going to impact the
22 scope? No. Will it impact the time line?

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1 Possibly.

2 And, that would have to be one of
3 those immediate call outs which we are charged
4 with after our first 30 days after our first
5 meeting.

6 So, I just spoke to Sheila and said,
7 highlight this one because this is going to be
8 something that we're going to need leverage,
9 whether it's POTUS, SVAC, HVAC to circumvent
10 OMB restrictions.

11 DR. MURPHY: And, I would ask that
12 you maybe think about the survey in broad
13 terms. So, it doesn't have to be a, you know,
14 a web based survey. It could be that you want
15 to meet with groups of Veterans in focus groups
16 while you're out doing your site visits where
17 you might be able to recruit both VA users and
18 non-users.

19 So, it could be either at
20 qualitative face to face information gathering
21 or --

22 CHAIR LEINENKUGEL: Well, Fran, I'll

1 interject and I'll tell you what we're missing.

2 First of all, we're missing the
3 VSOs, even though they represent 6 million
4 Veterans out of the 22, that's still a
5 significant group.

6 So, we need to activate this
7 afternoon how are we going to bring in the VSOs
8 in to become active partners for the survey?
9 First and foremost.

10 And, also, at some point, inclusion
11 into at least become public participants in the
12 open sessions. So, that's number one.

13 Number two is we always forget to
14 talk about state, county, local Veteran
15 services. We talked about it yesterday for the
16 Veterans Centers. There's a whole resource out
17 there as there is at the VA right now.

18 There are people within OPIA that
19 this is how they should be helping us as maybe
20 inclusion with the subcommittee or as
21 consultants, unpaid consultants because they're
22 already being paid.

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1 But, there's people out there that
2 know how to jump that shark, or at least will
3 have some ideas.

4 And, are we going to get to a 100
5 percent? No. Remember, we all said, I think
6 we agreed to the 80 percent principle or at
7 least I threw that out there, maybe you don't.

8 But, this is the meaty one I think
9 that is going to cause us issues. It's
10 fretting Fran and the SIGNA group because it is
11 a big, big thing that we need to at least
12 respond to within 30 days as a call out that
13 there could be some issues in us getting to a
14 good, what I call solid base sampling of the
15 two Veteran groups, the mental health group
16 within VA and those questions specifically that
17 we need to answer that were on the other pages.

18 And, the same with the other group
19 that are outside the VA, the much larger group.

20 So, I just throw that out there. I
21 think that once we get to this afternoon, and
22 once we start working on this before August

1 meeting.

2 Another group or another person I
3 did not mention is Lynda Davis, the Veteran
4 Experience Officer at VA, a wonderful resource.
5 Fran knows her. She has Medallia that's up and
6 running now. And Medallia can ping that
7 Veteran once they are days visit at the VA --
8 VHA was completed. How was your care?

9 And, I don't know how specific it
10 is, but Lynda's coming in on August, so maybe
11 we ping her prior to this to get a little more
12 background while we're doing the further survey
13 work as a subgroup.

14 DR. BEEMAN: Jumping this shark is a
15 new one to me.

16 (LAUGHTER)

17 DR. BEEMAN: Skinning the cat is
18 something I'm used to, but jumping the shark
19 sounds a lot more dangerous.

20 (LAUGHTER)

21 DR. BEEMAN: I think --

22 (OFF MICROPHONE COMMENTS)

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1 DR. BEEMAN: I think we need to use
2 the existing data sources as much as possible
3 because there's an awful lot of data out there.
4 It just seems to make sense to me that we would
5 use it, to not ask the same question over
6 again.

7 Having -- and that does identify the
8 gaps.

9 And then, the question that I would
10 have is, I think qualitative sometimes is more
11 effective than quantitative. And, the question
12 might be is, in each VSO could you get nine
13 people and let them run it and basically say,
14 we need you as partners so you guys are going
15 to have to just -- could you identify nine
16 people and ask this question set.

17 But, in addition, ask any other
18 question that you want to find out. Because, I
19 actually this it's sometimes better to hear
20 from a small group of people that has a chance
21 to interact than it does for people on an --
22 answering on a computer, yes, yes, yes, yes.

1 So, that might get us around the
2 paperwork thing because it would be within, you
3 know, it would be each VSO putting in for nine
4 people.

5 Just a thought.

6 CHAIR LEINENKUGEL: I like your
7 thinking because you own this one.

8 (LAUGHTER)

9 DR. MURPHY: So, we do patient focus
10 groups, as Eric said, with the clinical
11 practice guidelines. And, we went to OMB
12 saying, in general, we want to ask these --
13 this set of questions and then it's only
14 different, depending on what the underlying
15 condition is and they wouldn't give him
16 approval.

17 So, we're stuck doing patient focus
18 groups with nine Veterans for each guideline.

19 PARTICIPANT: We've got to jump that
20 shark now.

21 CHAIR LEINENKUGEL: Shark --

22 PARTICIPANT: It sounds like a whole

1 shark.

2 (LAUGHTER)

3 MR. ROSE: Mr. Chairman, just on the
4 VSO and back, looking at Kenosha County, small.
5 Okay? Made the call yesterday, right now,
6 we've got 13,500.

7 I had requested how many of the
8 13,500 are getting VA care at this point? Now,
9 I don't know if that's how far you want to, you
10 know, drill down to this or if we already know
11 that answer at a state level. I ask the
12 question, do we know?

13 CHAIR LEINENKUGEL: Jack, what
14 exactly is your question? I mean, do we know
15 what? Do we know the amount of Veterans --

16 MR. ROSE: Yes.

17 CHAIR LEINENKUGEL: -- by county?

18 MR. ROSE: Yes.

19 CHAIR LEINENKUGEL: By -- it all
20 depends on the state from what I know. So, I'm
21 not part of the state, Tribal group of OPIA,
22 but their resources are as in depth as yours.

1 They know exactly by most counties, and most
2 states --

3 MR. ROSE: Right.

4 CHAIR LEINENKUGEL: -- the
5 population of Veterans. But, it's all over the
6 board.

7 It could be off by 6,000 in Kenosha
8 County because 6,000 of them may have moved to
9 LA and Phoenix since the last time they took a
10 count.

11 And, it is a changing demographic.
12 Arizona's done the best work to date that I'm
13 aware of that has tracked down every Vet and is
14 now paying attention to transitioning Veterans
15 and where they're locating and going.

16 And also, following up with the type
17 of care or non-care that they're receiving.

18 So, I think Drew alluded to Arizona
19 yesterday being his home state with the suicide
20 prevention and what the Arizona coalition has
21 done and how they partnered with the state,
22 with the counties and with the various tribes,

1 and they've got a dozen tribes out there. And
2 they're very proactive.

3 But, again, it took nine years for
4 them to get there.

5 I would say from what you and I and
6 Jamil know with the State of Wisconsin, the
7 county VSOs and the county executive directors
8 do a fairly good job. But, I'll bet you that
9 their data and their numbers are not up to
10 date, would be my guess.

11 DR. JONAS: I'd just like to support
12 your thought about focus groups. I mean,
13 experience and preference are qualitative
14 issues. Okay?

15 So, they may lend themselves more to
16 qualitative research methods and there are
17 valid ways of doing qualitative research to get
18 to saturation where you've got 80 percent or
19 more of what the issues are.

20 And, in sometimes, collected even
21 better than having a checklist on a survey.

22 CHAIR LEINENKUGEL: A couple of

1 things I'm just thinking real quick here with
2 working the solution which Commissioners always
3 do and you're trying to get to an answer right
4 away.

5 So, again, let me throw out a couple
6 of other things.

7 This is going to be the challenging
8 one, but I like the direction that Tom stated
9 with qualitative. I like the focus group
10 because I know these can be done because
11 they're being done on an ongoing basis.

12 And, American Legion has the
13 capability to do them quite well.

14 I'm not sure, but I think DVA does,
15 DAV as well.

16 So, I mean, those groups probably
17 can help us out in the next 30 days.

18 And, making a decision based on
19 Fran's next step, maybe that becomes the new
20 approach that we use.

21 And, again, I think we would have to
22 send back and SVAC and HVAC because this law,

1 it was written by the people on The Hill. I
2 think there was 36 folks that signed on to
3 care.

4 And, we would have to back and
5 actually either make a clarify point saying,
6 this is the reality. And, I don't know what
7 reality is at this, except that there's some
8 barriers. That I do know.

9 The other thing is there it might be
10 cost to get to those other 9 million Veterans
11 not using VA or 14 million Veterans not using
12 VA health care.

13 So, are there other means and
14 methods to do this? The answer is yes, there
15 are.

16 So, I think this will be a very
17 interesting exercise, probably not just for a
18 subgroup but for all of us to collectively
19 think about and then come back by August so
20 this may very well be our first opportunity for
21 a teleconference call prior to the August
22 meeting. So, I'll throw that to Sheila and the

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1 work group as well.

2 Where, by the time we leave this
3 afternoon, we may have three items that we're
4 going to talk about on the teleconference call.
5 So, I'm sort of jumping ahead here.

6 Working this afternoon's project
7 based off of this. But, it's perfect timing, I
8 think, because we do need to leave here going
9 with not only how are we going to work, but
10 what are we going to work on? Then, who's going
11 to be accountable and responsible for the
12 outcomes back to the rest of the Commission? I
13 think that's a fair statement, would all the
14 Commissioners agree?

15 (NO AUDIBLE RESPONSE)

16 CHAIR LEINENKUGEL: That said, thank
17 you very much, Fran, because we could debate
18 with you all day long but we're going to break
19 for lunch and we'll think of more things by the
20 end of this session.

21 So, let me say this has been great.
22 It's been a great day and a half, again, my

1 perspective.

2 We're going to go into the final
3 phase of our first meeting which will be a
4 closed session. But, I want to make sure we
5 have enough time for everybody to make personal
6 calls, do things and we sort of truncated that
7 yesterday.

8 So, let's give ourselves until 1:30,
9 that's an hour and ten minutes and I'm going to
10 give that because I would like us to work
11 diligently from 1:30 until 4:00.

12 And then, try to conclude everything
13 by 4:00 on how we're going to work. And, then,
14 to see if there's any summation items or any
15 points of contention that need to be raised
16 from a 4:00 until 4:30 time frame.

17 And, it'll give Sheila, as the DFO,
18 time with her group to start to process things
19 of do outs of what we're going to need to do in
20 the next 30 days prior to our August meeting.

21 Then, we'll talk about the August
22 meeting and then, hopefully, we'll all depart

1 here with smiles on our faces at 4:30 this
2 afternoon.

3 Good plan? Let's see if we can
4 execute it.

5 Thanks.

6 (Whereupon, the above-entitled
7 matter went off the record at 12:22 p.m.)
8

X

Thomas (Jake) Leinenkuigel
Chairman, COVER Commission

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Comment [DK{}]: Signature block
is here

From: Hutton, James
Sent: 27 Jul 2018 05:41:31 -0700
To: Hutton, James
Subject: ICYMI - July 27, 2018

In Case You Missed It:

Below are Tweets sent this week with news links about #Veterans and links to Video/Audio products.

Links from Tweets will lead to full web articles for each posting.

James Hutton
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420
Office: 202-461-7558
Email: james.hutton@va.gov
Twitter: [@jehutton](https://twitter.com/jehutton)
VA on [Facebook](#) . [Twitter](#) . [YouTube](#) . [Flickr](#) . [Blog](#)

Twitter: [@jehutton](https://twitter.com/jehutton)

Robert Wilkie confirmed as Veterans Affairs secretary [ow.ly/74aV30l66WM](https://www.ow.ly/74aV30l66WM)

VA Blog: Virtual internship deadline approaching, apply now to intern with the VA
[ow.ly/L9Nm30l91Y1](https://www.ow.ly/L9Nm30l91Y1)

Disabled Veteran finds new freedom after being given a car [ow.ly/EG1z30l91R4](https://www.ow.ly/EG1z30l91R4)

VA Blog: Testing a Chinese mind-body exercise as a therapy for Gulf War Veterans
[ow.ly/MO9s30l921x](https://www.ow.ly/MO9s30l921x)

VA Blog: A Veteran and neurologist, Dr. John Ney saw a way to make a difference.
[ow.ly/sszS30l924j](https://www.ow.ly/sszS30l924j)

VA Blog: Introducing an Air Force Veteran and VA researcher with a colorful family history and a half-century of service with VA [ow.ly/5vdY30l926b](https://www.ow.ly/5vdY30l926b)

Veterans participate in latest Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans at Syracuse University ow.ly/7en630l91M3

At this Missouri retreat, Veterans can hunt, fish, be with family — all for free ow.ly/9iHY30l91Ih

National Veterans Memorial and Museum prepares for opening ow.ly/S7mx30l91By

Korean War Veterans recall armistice day ow.ly/Waku30l91ym

11-year-old comes to Wichita to honor fallen Veterans ow.ly/X4rC30l91v4

New Mexico: State honors Vietnam Veterans for war's 50th anniversary ow.ly/ZQ2c30l7YwG

Texas: "Hope Lives Here" Offering Hope for Veterans and Dogs ow.ly/B4UF30l7XEN

VA Blog: Long-time VA clinician, researcher inspired by those who have served ow.ly/k8gE30l7Y8w

Missouri: WWII Veterans receive Quilts of Valor ow.ly/8IWZ30l7XzO

VA Blog: The people behind the technology that enables Veterans care ow.ly/QGUH30l7Y73

South Dakota WWII Veterans honored with memorial coin ow.ly/uzj730l7Xsp

VA Blog: What does your social media page say about you? ow.ly/OJXJ30l7Y4Y

Veterans considered for jobs as part of 'National Hire A Veteran Day' ow.ly/ULLT30l7XoD

National Veterans Wheelchair Games coming to Orlando ow.ly/Ebyl30l7XXK

Veterans train for 'high-paying' manufacturing jobs at Rockwell Automation ow.ly/48yJ30l7XHx

Leinenkugel tapped to lead commission focused on Veterans' mental health ow.ly/7YPr30l6UrH

VA Blog: Keys to Progress: Company's program helps Veterans succeed with donated cars ow.ly/zcRr30l6Udb

VA Blog: Texas VA takes on Veterans Crisis Line Challenge ow.ly/me7H30l6UaN

National Hire A Veteran Day - Virtual Veteran Career Fair ow.ly/jiou30l71cX

VA Podcast: Bennie Adkins – Army Veteran, Medal of Honor recipient ow.ly/tzfd30l6U72

Massachusetts: Helping Veterans through service dogs ow.ly/1M8M30l6UBe

Idaho Veterans seek therapy in Ride For Joy programs ow.ly/1ppx30l6Uyj

VA Blog: Veterans Health Administration launches 'Innovation Experience Art Competition' ow.ly/TDA230l68zs

VA Blog: Whole Health, the Veteran's experience ow.ly/jGEO30l68t8

WEAU 13 (NBC) Eau Claire, Wisconsin: President Trump selects Jake Leinenkugel to lead VA commission ow.ly/MIGL30l67cJ

VA News Release: President Trump selects Jake Leinenkugel to lead VA commission focused on Veterans' mental health treatment ow.ly/Bc5R30l5S99

VA Blog: Five Ways the Phoenix VA is improving the Veterans experience ow.ly/RhKW30l592r

VA Blog: Breaking Down Barriers hiring event helps Veterans transition from incarceration to employment ow.ly/T9uN30l4Pro

VA Blog: New Rocky Mountain Regional Veterans Affairs Medical Center to accept outpatients beginning July 27 ow.ly/x0Qi30l58zk

Newsday - New York: Motorcycle run, car show benefit Suffolk County Veterans ow.ly/xVWK30l4Exm

Motorcycle Ride for Veterans in Poconos ow.ly/dyux30l4EnD

VA Blog: 125,000 times and counting: Veterans using My HealtheVet to manage appointments ow.ly/Vl5m30l4PPQ

VA Blog: "Top 25 Health Care Jobs" showcases opportunities to serve Veterans ow.ly/UdvK30l4PD0

Horses helping Veterans with PTSD heal ow.ly/ePsN30l4ylQ

From: Hutton, James
Sent: 20 Jul 2018 05:30:52 -0700
To: Hutton, James
Subject: ICYMI - July 20, 2018

In Case You Missed It:

Below are Tweets sent this week with news links about #Veterans and links to Video/Audio products.

Links from Tweets will lead to full web articles for each posting.

James Hutton
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420
Office: 202-461-7558
Email: james.hutton@va.gov
Twitter: [@jehutton](https://twitter.com/jehutton)
VA on [Facebook](#) . [Twitter](#) . [YouTube](#) . [Flickr](#) . [Blog](#)

Twitter: [@jehutton](https://twitter.com/jehutton)

VA Blog: Acting secretary discusses critical Veterans issues during DAV national convention
ow.ly/AI1L30kYg6G

Operation Homefront building homes for Veterans ow.ly/vO3S30l2CF0

VA Blog: An annual physical saved one Veteran's life ow.ly/SPHK30l2Eqj

VA and IBM Watson Health Extend Partnership to Support Veterans With Cancer
ow.ly/IDtP30l2Crn

VA Blog: Stay current on all things VA Careers in one easy click ow.ly/EgvQ30l2CHN

Virginia: Disabled Veterans group helping late Veteran's widow fix roof ow.ly/hPbe30l2Cv5

California: Veterans get acquainted with their new service dogs ow.ly/uB9U30l2CjB

Virginia: Overpass in Arlington to be named after Veterans ow.ly/mx0E30l2CoO

Indianapolis Star: Veterans can now ride for free on IndyGo bus routes. Here's how. [ow.ly/SU3m30l2Ch7](https://www.ow.ly/SU3m30l2Ch7)

Florida: Dogs adopted from shelters helping military Veterans cope with PTSD at new Brooksville facility [ow.ly/HIYY30l2C8C](https://www.ow.ly/HIYY30l2C8C)

California: Homeless Veterans Get Help In Sacramento [ow.ly/kdge30l2Cek](https://www.ow.ly/kdge30l2Cek)

Maine: Replica of Vietnam Veterans Memorial comes to Gardiner [ow.ly/TVtQ30l1sZD](https://www.ow.ly/TVtQ30l1sZD)

Indianapolis Veterans eligible for free bus passes [ow.ly/gZxO30l1sWy](https://www.ow.ly/gZxO30l1sWy)

Massachusetts: Veterans hit the seas for the annual fishing trip [ow.ly/44uU30l1sPQ](https://www.ow.ly/44uU30l1sPQ)

VA News Release: VA and IBM Watson Health Extend Partnership to Support Veterans With Cancer [ow.ly/11qX30l1AFB](https://www.ow.ly/11qX30l1AFB)

WWII Vet, 93, Among Disabled Veterans to Drive Race Car [ow.ly/yJSn30l1sMb](https://www.ow.ly/yJSn30l1sMb)

Groups Working to Build Homes for Native American Veterans [ow.ly/5lWj30l1t87](https://www.ow.ly/5lWj30l1t87)

Wounded Veteran looks to help newly wounded soldiers [ow.ly/nFwZ30l1t57](https://www.ow.ly/nFwZ30l1t57)

Colorado: Military Veterans with Team Rubicon help communities in aftermath of Spring Fire [ow.ly/5ldQ30l0V8F](https://www.ow.ly/5ldQ30l0V8F)

Inmate-trained service dogs bring hope to soldiers, Veterans [ow.ly/7ccR30l0V4Q](https://www.ow.ly/7ccR30l0V4Q)

East Carolina University is providing college transition assistance to military Veterans [ow.ly/7K2430l0V2R](https://www.ow.ly/7K2430l0V2R)

University of Arizona hosting Warrior Scholar Project for Veterans [ow.ly/ULBd30l0UYI](https://www.ow.ly/ULBd30l0UYI)

VA Blog: Research helps Veteran-actor succeed despite TBI and related growth-hormone deficiency [ow.ly/yh6X30l0UJQ](https://www.ow.ly/yh6X30l0UJQ)

VA Podcast: Dan Cnossen – Navy Veteran, Paralympic Gold Medalist [ow.ly/AfUi30l0UGd](https://www.ow.ly/AfUi30l0UGd)

Dallas: Non-Profit Creates Business Incubator For Veterans [ow.ly/DLyZ30kZjMI](https://www.ow.ly/DLyZ30kZjMI)

Arizona: Workshop for Veterans eases transition to college [ow.ly/4jDg30kZjKG](https://www.ow.ly/4jDg30kZjKG)

Texas man slated to be the first @USArmy doctor in space [ow.ly/9RPP30kZHmd](https://www.ow.ly/9RPP30kZHmd)

Detroit Veterans find next "mission" in entrepreneurship [ow.ly/UphF30kZjGY](https://www.ow.ly/UphF30kZjGY)

VA News Release: VEText system transforming VA's medical scheduling process
ow.ly/1Rif30kZwvI

Madison VA Hospital holds Veterans town hall meeting in Rockford ow.ly/8FWj30kZjYu

Milwaukee-based Guitars for Vets helps Veterans across the country stay mentally in tune
ow.ly/fse830kZjzl

South Dakota Veterans Honored With New Commemorative Coin ow.ly/5hMU30kZjVd

Massachusetts: Three Ladies and Some Grateful Veterans "...the VA saved my life".
ow.ly/43nj30kZjPg

NPR: Fewer Homeless Veterans On LA's Streets ow.ly/7Q3j30kYjwX

VA Blog: Veterans choosing to be tobacco free ow.ly/Gwlz30kYggg

Pennsylvania: Bikers Take Part in 19th Annual Salute to Veterans Ride ow.ly/I7bJ30kYmta

VA Blog: My Life, My Story: innovative program helps improve quality of Veteran care
ow.ly/ZcnM30kYfYa

From: Hutton, James
Sent: 6 Jul 2018 07:29:49 -0700
To: Hutton, James
Subject: ICYMI - July 6, 2018

In Case You Missed It:

Below are Tweets sent this week with news links about #Veterans and links to Video/Audio products.

Links from Tweets will lead to full web articles for each posting.

James Hutton
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420
Office: 202-461-7558
Email: james.hutton@va.gov
Twitter: [@ajehutton](https://twitter.com/ajehutton)
VA on [Facebook](#) . [Twitter](#) . [YouTube](#) . [Flickr](#) . [Blog](#)

Twitter: [@jehutton](#)

Fox News (VIDEO): 'Black Hawk Down' hero takes on opioid crisis [ow.ly/lda630kOjHe](https://www.foxnews.com/video/clip/fox-news-black-hawk-down-hero-takes-opioid-crisis)

VA News Release: Award-winning VA video series, The American Veteran, receives 2017 regional Emmy Award ow.ly/hbzB30kLgoe

VA Blog: VA's Tele-ICU: innovative care for rural Veterans ow.ly/S86430kOH7A

Patriot Rovers trains dogs to help Veterans with PTSD ow.ly/unxE30kPrFu

Ohio Vietnam Veteran skydives to help Veterans find safety net of a job [ow.ly/kTKB30kPrCw](https://www.ohio.gov/newsroom/ohio-vietnam-veteran-skydives-to-help-veterans-find-safety-net-of-a-job)

Golf: PGA HOPE is helping military Veterans discover comfort in community
ow.ly/vtwD30kPrze

VA News Release: VA Releases State-level Veteran Suicide Data, National Strategy for Preventing Veteran Suicide [ow.ly/NeuT30kMQKG](https://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/pr09-001.asp)

VA employee rescues dogs, helps fellow Veterans [ow.ly/g7yt30kPrws](https://www.ow.ly/g7yt30kPrws)

ParadeRest now collecting Vietnam Veterans' stories [ow.ly/XP4530kPru6](https://www.ow.ly/XP4530kPru6)

Military.com - Bank Restores Funds Stolen from Oldest Living Veteran's Account
[ow.ly/TN2v30kOxnC](https://www.ow.ly/TN2v30kOxnC)

VA Blog: Boat project helps keep Veterans afloat [ow.ly/QH2Y30kOH3R](https://www.ow.ly/QH2Y30kOH3R)

Veterans finish cannon restoration at Sioux City cemetery [ow.ly/igfP30kOy5k](https://www.ow.ly/igfP30kOy5k)

VA Blog: Changes coming to Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance program
[ow.ly/jHTL30kN2ZT](https://www.ow.ly/jHTL30kN2ZT)

Maine Veterans enjoy 'trip of a lifetime' to memorials [ow.ly/Q8f330kOxCL](https://www.ow.ly/Q8f330kOxCL)

Delaware: Fisher House helping Veterans year-round [ow.ly/4Pr930kOxxg](https://www.ow.ly/4Pr930kOxxg)

Texas: Amazon launches hiring program in Austin for Veterans [ow.ly/M0Ad30kMjF1](https://www.ow.ly/M0Ad30kMjF1)

Tuskegee Airmen, WV Veterans mural unveiled at Yeager Airport [ow.ly/44fn30kMjAt](https://www.ow.ly/44fn30kMjAt)

Maryland-Navy will square off in Annapolis in 2018 Veterans Classic [ow.ly/CMKS30kMjpA](https://www.ow.ly/CMKS30kMjpA)

196th Infantry Brigade Honors Vietnam Veterans [ow.ly/fGt730kMjwY](https://www.ow.ly/fGt730kMjwY)

Florida program helps Veterans go from the battlefield to the business world [ow.ly/7Pjk30kMjg3](https://www.ow.ly/7Pjk30kMjg3)

Honor Flight Nevada Veterans ring in Independence week [ow.ly/gUX030kMjve](https://www.ow.ly/gUX030kMjve)

Ohio: Museum to show experiences of Veterans, families [ow.ly/YURJ30kMj6n](https://www.ow.ly/YURJ30kMj6n)

WWII Veterans surprised with a "virtual" Honor Flight [ow.ly/OpZ630kMju2](https://www.ow.ly/OpZ630kMju2)

University of Miami Student Honors Pearl Harbor Veteran [ow.ly/4rLM30kLN3W](https://www.ow.ly/4rLM30kLN3W)

New York: Suffolk jail program offers second chance for Veterans, service dog
[ow.ly/Null30kMjrU](https://www.ow.ly/Null30kMjrU)

VA Blog: VA honors Veterans this Independence Day [ow.ly/uxuA30kMYM4](https://www.ow.ly/uxuA30kMYM4)

New Mexico: Veterans Services outreach staff in Ruidoso July 10 [ow.ly/KoVg30kLMSu](https://www.ow.ly/KoVg30kLMSu)

South Carolina: University of South Carolina Veterans to receive free legal help at USC
[ow.ly/9WhM30kLKKK](https://www.ow.ly/9WhM30kLKKK)

Chickasaw Veterans to enjoy enhanced benefits ow.ly/ssAA30kLA8e

Tallahassee Community College offers program to train Veterans to become teachers ow.ly/EmLE30kLKH4

VHA Innovation podcast describes how VA is leading the way in 3D printing ow.ly/64s330kLzRJ

Veteran indicators on driver's licenses, ID cards ow.ly/INOa30kLKle

VA Blog: Independence Day events at VA Medical Centers ow.ly/SYVc30kMAID

Dallas: How equine therapy can save Veterans like me ow.ly/NKUk30kLKCc

Pennsylvania: Civil War Veteran honored with tombstone in Shanksville ow.ly/AdEi30kL7Nf

Politico: Hoover signs Veterans Administration Act, July 3, 1930 ow.ly/z4dt30kMjar

Illinois: Vietnam Veteran remembers the day that changed his life forever ow.ly/EAOs30kLKy6

Georgia: 5 Veterans To Graduate Cobb Courts Program ow.ly/N6CI30kLKol

Parade: This Adorable Therapy Dog Just Landed a High-Profile Veteran Client ow.ly/iWj830kL7D5

Minnesota: Disabled Veterans Floating The Mississippi For Cancer Research ow.ly/PpLE30kL7qL

Veterans Village of San Diego hosts Stand Down event to help homeless Veterans ow.ly/Xvlt30kL6TV

Army Holds Overdue Ceremony to Honor Vietnam Veterans ow.ly/nSz130kL71A

Fox News: 'Good Cemeterian' honors veterans by restoring gravestones, celebrating their stories ow.ly/tCol30kLN12

'Warriors in the Field' helps Veterans get back on their feet ow.ly/UmCS30kL6Q2

North Carolina: Fourth of July 2018: Discounts for Veterans and active military ow.ly/Kdku30kL7jk

VA Blog: VA San Diego is studying PTSD and moral wounds ow.ly/Zjji30kL6LA

'Black Hawk Down' soldier becomes pharmacist to help other Veterans in need ow.ly/YiYj30kL71a

VA Blog: 4th of July: A time to celebrate and remember ow.ly/bNzr30kL6GN

North Dakota rock journalist connecting Veterans to music ow.ly/QE7A30kL6Wy

From: Hutton, James
Sent: 29 Jun 2018 11:36:34 -0700
To: Hutton, James
Subject: ICYMI - June 29, 2018

In Case You Missed It:

Below are Tweets sent this week with news links about #Veterans and links to Video/Audio products.

Links from Tweets will lead to full web articles for each posting.

James Hutton
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420
Office: 202-461-7558
Email: james.hutton@va.gov
Twitter: [@jehutton](https://twitter.com/jehutton)
VA on [Facebook](#) . [Twitter](#) . [YouTube](#) . [Flickr](#) . [Blog](#)

Twitter: [@jehutton](https://twitter.com/jehutton)

Acting VA secretary visits Memphis hospital, director touts improvements
ow.ly/BWxH30kI80W

Modern Healthcare Magazine Recognizes VA's Top Physician as one of 2018's 50 Most Influential Physician Executives and Leaders ow.ly/tBvf30kIskS

Pittsburgh -- VA: Efforts continue to reduce Veterans suicides ow.ly/AvSU30kJ3X2

Florida: VA program helps senior Veterans stay fit ow.ly/VUOS30kJ4d9

Indianapolis: Veterans fly on B-17 Bomber ow.ly/QULZ30kJ48s

Central Minnesota Habitat for Humanity Creates Veterans Build Project ow.ly/J3Zc30kJ44r

Marine Times - Commentary: Veterans are leaders that companies need ow.ly/4Qxa30kJ3Qw

VA Blog: Veteran provides Wisconsin VA with hand-crafted Star-Spangled Banner ow.ly/53mZ30kJ2N0

How to Request Military Honors, Veterans Cemetery Plot in the Ozarks ow.ly/YTSL30kJ2Tn

VA Blog: VA nurse receives national award for excellence ow.ly/xug130kJ2Hy

Missouri: Program places service dogs with traumatized Veterans ow.ly/n6FE30kIesY

VA Blog: VA now reminds Veterans of their appointments by text ow.ly/PD2o30kJ2Bi

Mainers prepare for Veterans Appreciation Day ow.ly/u48330kJepv

VA Blog: The loneliness factor: How much does it drive depression in Veterans? ow.ly/pkod30kJ25e

Minnesota: Vietnam 'band of brothers' gather for reunion in Chatfield ow.ly/V8WQ30kIekB

Texas: Del Mar College offers extra help to Veterans ow.ly/QooQ30kIeyN

Honoring Veterans at VA Los Angeles National Cemetery (VIDEO) ow.ly/RHVF30kIQRV

Journalist documents experiences of WWII combat Veterans ow.ly/5HI830kI7zE

Florida: Veterans group offers art, music programs ow.ly/PEgd30kI7uu

St. Louis: Operation Wolfhound pairs service dogs with Veterans in need ow.ly/YEGw30kI7e0

University of Kentucky: College of Engineering Honored With Excellence for Veterans Award ow.ly/pGLk30kI7oz

First-ever graduating class of Northern Kentucky Veterans Treatment Court celebrates fresh start ow.ly/15vf30kI6Md

Academic boot camp, hosted by University of Oklahoma, helps Veterans transition to four-year college ow.ly/5I8B30kI7KG

First National Native American Veterans Memorial will follow Marine Veteran's design ow.ly/HGdJ30kI7ja

Texas: Three Vietnam Veterans reunited after 50 years ow.ly/oaQY30kI7En

Fox News: Farming non-profit helps Veterans with PTSD reintegrate into civilian life ow.ly/Mz3B30kI6IV

Nebraska Veterans court graduates first participants ow.ly/35B830kI6zW

What The Native American Veterans Memorial Will Bring To DC ow.ly/U6Ot30kH9cr

Michigan: WWII Veterans visit Willow Run factory where their bombers were built
ow.ly/NXgO30kGDPz

Design chosen for first national monument to Native American Veterans ow.ly/9l9D30kGDtj

Veteran homes in Michigan earn perfect score on latest VA survey ow.ly/k9k630kGDGq

VA Blog: Service dog comforts Vietnam Veteran after surgery ow.ly/YDwm30kGDqp

Former Pittsburgh Steeler helping area Veterans ow.ly/98LO30kGDAR

VA Blog: VA now reminds Veterans of their appointments by text ow.ly/jlAa30kGDoh

Every Veteran Has a Story-- Veterans Writing Workshops Help Bring them Out
ow.ly/LDTK30kGDv8

VA Podcast: David Zurfluh – Air Force Veteran, National President of Paralyzed Veterans of America ow.ly/D8pi30kGDiC

Design chosen for first national monument to Native American Veterans ow.ly/9l9D30kGDtj

VA Blog: Older Veterans with PTSD take part in exercise program aimed at easing symptoms
ow.ly/1HdH30kGDmQ

Veterans seek jobs on the Las Vegas Strip at MGM job fair ow.ly/BTK630kGDwX

Smithsonian Reveals Winning Design For New Native American Veterans Memorial : NPR
ow.ly/GOA430kFZxI

Civil War Veteran gets military burial 100 years after death ow.ly/1s1a30kFZpg

Marine Veteran receives new home through Navajo Nation partnership Navajo & Hopi Nations, AZ ow.ly/HqEP30kFZhz

Sandusky Register - Fishing event helps Veterans heal sanduskyregister.com/story/20180622...

News Tribune - 20 Veterans presented with 'most important' honor ow.ly/PhQh30kEpi2

New York Times: Veterans Need Not Apply nyti.ms/2IpSUis?smid=n...

From: Hutton, James
Sent: 22 Jun 2018 06:23:31 -0700
To: Hutton, James
Subject: ICYMI - June 22, 2018

In Case You Missed It:

Below are Tweets sent this week with news links about #Veterans and links to Video/Audio products.

Links from Tweets will lead to full web articles for each posting.

James Hutton
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420
Office: 202-461-7558
Email: james.hutton@va.gov
Twitter: [@jehutton](https://twitter.com/jehutton)
VA on [Facebook](#) . [Twitter](#) . [YouTube](#) . [Flickr](#) . [Blog](#)

Twitter: [@jehutton](https://twitter.com/jehutton)

USA Today - View from Acting VA Secretary Peter O'Rourke, "VA: USA TODAY's article is misleading." [ow.ly/1V4x30kBdYK](https://www.ow.ly/1V4x30kBdYK)

VA Secretary says Dallas hospital improving [ow.ly/shtr30kyXyt](https://www.ow.ly/shtr30kyXyt)

*California: Long Beach VA Nursing Home Gets Top Rating
[ow.ly/x2Oc30kCj4l](https://www.ow.ly/x2Oc30kCj4l)*

*Oregon: Roseburg VA nursing home receives four star rating
[ow.ly/JXQQ30kCj7y](https://www.ow.ly/JXQQ30kCj7y)*

Long Beach Veterans Affairs nursing home receives 5-star rating
ow.ly/Suc630kxNkS

Poplar Bluff VA medical nursing home gets 4-star rating
ow.ly/M2M230kxNtl

4-star rating for Tomah VA nursing home ow.ly/eZTG30kxNqE

VA Portland Health Care System Nursing Home Receives 5-Star Rating
ow.ly/Q5j230kxNnp

Iron Mountain VA Nursing Home receives 5-star rating
ow.ly/SKQL30kxNxx

VA News Release: VA Showcases New Medical Advancements in Veteran Care on Capitol Hill
ow.ly/Wjah30kzAHK

Nebraska: Public is asked to attend services for two Veterans with no Omaha-area family
ow.ly/HN3H30kCiMS

Pittsburgh: 8-year-old spends profits from lemonade stand on homeless Veterans
ow.ly/QKtm30kCiK9

Wisconsin: Summit to Help Minority Veterans Find Resources ow.ly/YI1030kCiHS

NASCAR's Stars & Stripes Weekend to salute Veterans ow.ly/v5wp30kCiPz

VA Blog: VA dietitian looks at alternative protein source for those with less meat in their diet
ow.ly/IHZV30kCiCF

Columbus Dispatch: Columbus will host national Veterans museum ow.ly/26Rq30kCiUf

Unaccompanied Veterans honored at Bakersfield National Cemetery ow.ly/z7LZ30kCiYx

Service Dogs May Lower Stress Levels of Veterans With PTSD ow.ly/9GqT30kBeFk

VA Blog: Researchers help Veterans at risk of suicide build mutual support network
ow.ly/rCmL30kCiAJ

Study: Veterans With PTSD May Benefit From The Use Of Service Dogs ow.ly/4wol30kAv51

Purple Heart truck road trip helps blaze a trail for Veterans starting over ow.ly/Rvx430kBein

VA Blog: Employers answer the call at Mayor's Challenge conference to help prevent suicide ow.ly/yNmQ30kAv0t

Newson6: Mayor Honors Tulsa Companies For Hiring Veterans ow.ly/qnuy30kBegb

VA Blog: Caring for Veterans helps VA nurse find healing ow.ly/gazq30kAuY5

Wall Street Journal: President Trump Officially Nominates a Veterans Affairs Secretary ow.ly/lv7f30kBe9Y

Iowa: Paws for a Cause to help get Veterans a service dog ow.ly/dQBn30kJhH

Fort Sill hosts welcome home ceremony for Vietnam Veterans ow.ly/4G1S30kAvdD

Texas A&M again hosting program to prepare Veterans for college life ow.ly/iPo130kAv8g

Sixth VA Mental Health Summit Held by Zablocki VA Medical Center and UW-Milwaukee Focuses On African-American Veterans ow.ly/YZ7M30kBes3

Atlanta: Job fair for Veterans, spouses kicks off at Mercedes Benz Stadium today ow.ly/ucfT30kBeyd

More than 600 women Veterans attend Virginia summit ow.ly/liAO30kzIzK

West Virginia VA hospital being renamed in World War II Medal of Honor recipient Woody Williams' honor ow.ly/mCcW30kzJgA

Pennsylvania: Veterans Compete in Fishing Tournament ow.ly/VoCl30kzIyg

Army's 66th Infantry Division World War II Veterans hold emotional final reunion ow.ly/med330kzJ94

3-star general named president, CEO of National Veterans Memorial and Museum ow.ly/XW3e30kzIwh

Las Vegas: MGM Resorts' Veterans Career Fair, June 26 in the Mandalay Bay Convention Center from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. ow.ly/yb0I30kzJ4t

VA Blog: Mexico's Aztec Eagles allied with America to fight the war in the pacific during WWII ow.ly/5P8I30kz9Ux

St. Louis: Pets For Patriots aim to help Veterans in distress ow.ly/QybR30kzIW0

University of Georgia School of Law to open clinic for Veterans this month ow.ly/vVYN30kzIBb

Wisconsin: Tomah VA Holding Town Hall Meetings on Wednesday ow.ly/YUZE30kzIK2

[KRGV.com](https://www.krgv.com) ABC5, VA Creates New Policy to Protect Veterans from Predatory Loans
ow.ly/eq3T30kyZLN

Founding CEO & President of National Veterans Museum & Memorial Announced Today
ow.ly/ZNoA30kzING

97-year-old Air Force Veteran gets back in the cockpit ow.ly/fRqd30kxX1i

99-year-old WWII Veteran stops in Tennessee on US "No Regrets Tour" ow.ly/hVqX30kxWUX

Nebraska Court Offers Treatment, Support to Veterans ow.ly/lES730kyXrb

Expansion of telemedicine benefits Veterans in rural Kansas ow.ly/uFhy30kxWMv

VA Blog: VA and AMVETS team up to discuss the benefits MyHealtheVet on Facebook Live
June 26 ow.ly/Yp8s30kyXob

Veterans salute to precede college home run derby ow.ly/wbEf30kxWHk

VA Blog: VA issues new policy to protect Veteran homeowners from predatory lending
ow.ly/i8Gk30kyXmA

VA News Release - VA Releases National Suicide Data Report: Analysis Part of VA's
Comprehensive Examination of More Than 55 Million Death Records ow.ly/U3VH30kyXiT
Veterans

Oklahoma VA health care system to open mental health addition, call center bit.ly/2JLLV4N via
[@KTULNews](https://twitter.com/KTULNews)

Soup of 'Seinfeld' fame being shared with NJ Veterans ow.ly/DOQr30kxWCI

VA Blog: VA medical center employees partner with local organizations to serve Veterans and
their families ow.ly/uaNs30kxNeM

PGA HOPE program connecting Veterans ow.ly/tCdM30kxWjw

Free legal clinic offered to help Virginia Veterans ow.ly/IRJW30kxNgZ

VA Blog: Hepatitis C screening initiative tests positive for saving Veterans' lives
ow.ly/4sUa30kxNcO

From: Hutton, James
Sent: 11 May 2018 09:13:25 -0700
To: Hutton, James
Subject: ICYMI - May 11, 2018

In Case You Missed It:

Below are Tweets sent this week with news links about #Veterans and links to Video/Audio products.

Links from Tweets will lead to full web articles for each posting.

James Hutton
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420
Office: 202-461-7558
Email: james.hutton@va.gov
Twitter: [@jehutton](https://twitter.com/jehutton)
VA on [Facebook](#) . [Twitter](#) . [YouTube](#) . [Flickr](#) . [Blog](#)



Twitter: [@jehutton](https://twitter.com/jehutton)

Fox and Friends: VA Nurse and Veteran -- ‘For every bad thing you hear that goes on at the VA, there’s a thousand great things that go on there that you will never hear about’ [ow.ly/MZs930jVOoC](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZs930jVOoC)

**VA Podcast: Raymond Kaloplastos – Army Veteran, Mobile Vet Center
[ow.ly/n0HQ30jWKSq](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n0HQ30jWKSq)**

VA Blog: New England VA medical centers prepare Veterans for their journey in parenthood [ow.ly/k8nB30jWKWr](https://www.ow.ly/k8nB30jWKWr)

VA Blog: VA's Rapid Appeals Modernization Program now open to all appeals [ow.ly/XbSc30jWKP9](https://www.ow.ly/XbSc30jWKP9)

Big hearts built tiny homes for homeless Veterans [ow.ly/j1PH30jWL9y](https://www.ow.ly/j1PH30jWL9y)

Arkansas: WWII Navy Veterans visit Razorback submarine [ow.ly/9bd430jVDO6](https://www.ow.ly/9bd430jVDO6)

VA and Navajo Nation To Host Event For Veterans With Disabilities Eligible For VA Pension [ow.ly/uqn030jVDJ7](https://www.ow.ly/uqn030jVDJ7)

VA Blog: Food truck owner offers jobs and more to Veterans who have experienced homelessness [ow.ly/841J30jVC4M](https://www.ow.ly/841J30jVC4M)

Kentucky: Benton Veterans with PTSD getting free service dogs [ow.ly/2XL330jVDwr](https://www.ow.ly/2XL330jVDwr)

VA Podcast: Bruce Silverglade – @USArmy Veteran, Owner of New York's Gleason's Gym [ow.ly/RPF230jVC0M](https://www.ow.ly/RPF230jVC0M)

New Jersey: Cape May Country Herald Managing Editor Alfred S. Campbell Receives Medals for Service in Vietnam War [ow.ly/FjUp30jVCih](https://www.ow.ly/FjUp30jVCih)

VA Blog: Join VA and DAV for a Facebook Live virtual tour of a Vet Center May 21, 7 p.m. EDT [ow.ly/hDyo30jVBYr](https://www.ow.ly/hDyo30jVBYr)

VA Blog: Add a little spring in your step during National Physical Fitness and Sports Month [ow.ly/2Gyk30jVC9w](https://www.ow.ly/2Gyk30jVC9w)

VA Blog: Inspire: Hurricane Harvey – an SCI nurse's story [ow.ly/HJbt30jURRy](https://www.ow.ly/HJbt30jURRy)

New York: Veterans attend Hudson Valley Veterans Job Fair at New Paltz [ow.ly/Er6o30jVDSV](https://www.ow.ly/Er6o30jVDSV)

VA Blog: Army Veteran recalls arriving in Europe the day before the Battle of the Bulge [ow.ly/N3RP30jVC6C](https://www.ow.ly/N3RP30jVC6C) Veterans

3D Printing Hope: Seeking to Change Veterans' Lives with a Design Challenge
ow.ly/fxzC30jURwx

New Mexico: Veterans motorcycle ride to pass through Las Cruces in 30th year
ow.ly/VTNU30jURk1

VA Medical Center hosts first-ever baby shower for female Veterans
ow.ly/vhww30jUQVh

Tennessee: 16 graduating women Veterans surprised with Quilts of Valor
ow.ly/Tqzd30jURdK

Entrepreneurial Veterans Make Business Connections at Conference
ow.ly/oiZS30jUQPI

VA Blog: Add a little spring in your step during National Physical Fitness and Sports Month ow.ly/Wsc430jURGj

Army Ranger's memory brings 'comfort' to Veterans ow.ly/f0wG30jUR3r

VA Blog: VA's Rapid Appeals Modernization Program now open to all appeals
ow.ly/KemK30jURAw

Paul Newman was determined to help Veterans in need, says close friend
ow.ly/5szu30jUR08

Massachusetts: Fishing tournament provides disabled Veterans with day of therapy
ow.ly/2GGe30jURr5

This 20-year-old is on a mission to interview every single living WWII Veteran
ow.ly/2N2T30jTkuj

California: Group Trains Military Veterans to Become Sports Officials
ow.ly/mR6B30jTjCv

Little Rock VA: Once a homeless Veteran, this nurse turned his life around to help other Veterans ow.ly/8nq530jTjIY

VA Blog: Innovate: A collaboration of nursing excellence at the Minneapolis VA health care center ow.ly/58CH30jTk56

VA Release: Statement by Acting VA Secretary Robert Wilkie - Committee Approval of H.R. 5674, the VA MISSION Act ow.ly/SrzQ30jTyo6

Veteran who served during World War II, Korea and Vietnam to speak at VE Day ceremony in DC ow.ly/eEyr30jTjh8

VA Blog: Veterans benefits scam alert: Beware of scammers impersonating VA attorneys ow.ly/Ln0m30jTpPw

VA Blog: Philips joins VA and the American Legion in sponsoring the 2018 Nationwide Baby Shower ow.ly/BVYq30jTk04

VA Podcast: Benefits Breakdown – Community Engagement, Homeless Programs ow.ly/3DUV30jTjQq

Texas: Vietnam Veterans honored in Harker Heights ow.ly/3uic30jRMoK

Over 1000 San Diegans welcome home Honor Flight Veterans ow.ly/nBXe30jRMba

VA Blog: Inspire: ICU Nurse makes a last wish come true ow.ly/gJMe30jRMAR

Team Rubicon and the BLM train Idaho Veterans to fight wildland fires ow.ly/o5Y230jRM7x

VA Blog: Public Service Recognition Week encourages service to others ow.ly/31Ru30jRMwY

Hampton VA Medical Center to host military Veteran baby shower ow.ly/z8Kt30jRM4L

From: Hutton, James
Sent: 2 Mar 2018 08:10:06 -0800
To: Hutton, James
Subject: ICYMI - March 2, 2018

In Case You Missed It:

Below are Tweets sent this week with news links about #Veterans and links to Video/Audio products.

Links from Tweets will lead to full web articles for each posting.

James Hutton
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420
Office: 202-461-7558
Email: james.hutton@va.gov
Twitter: [@jehutton](https://twitter.com/jehutton)
VA on [Facebook](#) . [Twitter](#) . [YouTube](#) . [Flickr](#) . [Blog](#)



Twitter: [@jehutton](https://twitter.com/jehutton)

VA Blog: VA to state Veterans directors: We're advancing technology to improve access, services to Veterans goo.gl/6Ci1QM

VA News Release: VA Partners with Cohen Veterans Network to Increase Access to Mental Health Resources goo.gl/Nxn4Ko

VA Blog: Celebrating Women's History Month: VA's history in serving women Veterans goo.gl/6rk3dx

VA Blog: Veteran athlete discovers perseverance leads to success despite defeat goo.gl/zg2Q4w

Forbes: The VA Will Eliminate Hepatitis C In Veterans By Year-End goo.gl/fSvNxv

CBS: Pentagon receives orders to plan military parade for Veterans Day goo.gl/kd5oRY

VA Blog: VA to state Veterans directors: We're advancing technology to improve access, services to Veterans goo.gl/xdF263

National Resource Directory provides centralized access to information, resources for Veterans goo.gl/VBBj4T

Army Veteran's advice for dealing with multiple sclerosis – Healing the brain and body with mindfulness, meditation, and spirituality goo.gl/A6kNtE

Veteran athlete lives life on her own terms despite two autoimmune disorders goo.gl/hJwKaT

VA, DeepMind Partner for Machine Learning, Predictive Analytics goo.gl/uACkdD

'Bet on a Vet': Atlantic City Casinos Want to Help Get Veterans Jobs goo.gl/d4UL7K

Fox News: Stop discriminating against military Veterans with service dogs goo.gl/Lt5sBw

Norman becomes first community in Oklahoma to effectively end Veterans homelessness goo.gl/c6gT2f

VA Blog: Veterans -- Here's how to avoid getting the flu goo.gl/EAdLQ4

Michigan: Bay County Veteran of the Year drives Veterans to their medical appointments goo.gl/xbwU52

VA Blog: Veterans Legacy Program: Pfc. Kenneth Tibbs, the sacrifice of one of the first African-American Marines in WWII goo.gl/SQTcgu

Ohio: Lorain Valor Home wants to help homeless female Veterans with housing and jobs goo.gl/EbzBce

Univ. of Missouri study finds horseback riding helps Veterans coping with PTSD goo.gl/jioYY4

New Mexico: Veterans to show work at arts festival goo.gl/dj3z7E

A handy business to help Hawaii Veterans goo.gl/vA6xHE

Ohio: Women Veterans Resource Expo and Interactive Workshop set March 2 at Cuyahoga Community College goo.gl/kjAuzq

Louisiana nonprofit helps Veterans with PTSD train service dogs goo.gl/4HxCey

Central Texas College to host Veterans' Benefits Expo in Killeen goo.gl/U4FNBk

With 1500 jobs open, Atlantic City casinos look to hire military Veterans goo.gl/vQAN7V

Minnesota: 'Hiring Our Heroes' Aims To Get Jobs For Veterans goo.gl/FqrtSP

Las Vegas: Veteran's Village to build tiny house community for homeless Veterans
goo.gl/r6Nhci

Texas: VII Corps Desert Storm Veterans Association hosts reunion dinner in Killeen
goo.gl/3xXaDz

VA Partners with DeepMind to Use AI to Identify Deterioration Risk Factors goo.gl/uxGDof

Dogs Can Help Dramatically Reduce PTSD Symptoms in Veterans goo.gl/UwLyqE

Chattanooga Housing Authority gets 35 vouchers for homeless Veterans goo.gl/frtiAM

VA Blog: Mosul to Maine – For this Veteran, a journey of trauma and recovery goo.gl/Zjm9sX

Fox News: Military parade planners eye Veterans Day for event, official says goo.gl/DXH5fV

Stars & Stripes: Pilot program pairs pups with Veterans suffering with PTSD goo.gl/Lcf7ZA

From: Hutton, James
Sent: 19 Jan 2018 11:42:35 -0800
To: Hutton, James
Subject: ICYMI - January 19, 2018

In Case You Missed It:

Below are Tweets sent this week with news links about #Veterans and links to Video/Audio products.

Links from Tweets will lead to full web articles for each posting.

James Hutton
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420
Office: 202-461-7558
Email: james.hutton@va.gov
Twitter: [@jehutton](https://twitter.com/jehutton)

Twitter: [@jehutton](https://twitter.com/jehutton)

Fox News: Secretary Shulkin on why top positions remain vacant at VA goo.gl/EdY2TB

WFED (AM-1500): Shulkin: 'VA still far short of bold, transformational change we need' goo.gl/cV2hWS

VA Blog: Regional VA using technology to keep Veterans informed, manage appointments goo.gl/DXTw2U

VA Blog: VA therapist helps dying Veteran complete bucket list goo.gl/CZKS3n

VA News Release: VA Revises Regulations on Reimbursement for Emergency Treatment of Veterans goo.gl/SiJi4R

VA Blog: National Guard Veteran finds help, home and hope with his four-legged friend goo.gl/kXGLQx

VA To Offer Hyperbaric Oxygen Therapy For Some Veterans With PTSD goo.gl/5FHT3S

VA Blog: Partnership allows VA to reach more Veterans with services, supplies goo.gl/yXU587

VA Podcast: Chris Rolph – Air Force Veteran, Student Veteran of the Year goo.gl/3gP56z

VA Becomes First Hospital System to Release Opioid Prescribing Rates goo.gl/8gcm83

Georgia: Macon Vietnam Veteran starts shelter for homeless Veterans goo.gl/QBWm2r

VA News Release: VA Becomes First Hospital System to Release Opioid Prescribing Rates goo.gl/r8oeq3

VA News Release: VA Facilities Now Offer Same-day Care for Urgent Primary and Mental Health-care Needs goo.gl/8fhQzE

VA Blog: Calling all artists, performers, musicians and writers: Veterans arts festival and competitions kick off -- Nearly 3,500 competed at local VA facilities in 2017 goo.gl/YuXrsS

Florida: Bay Pines VA modernizing for Veterans -- "The Bay Pines VA Healthcare System in Florida is modernizing and improving its facilities, programs, and services for the more than 108,000 Veterans it serves." goo.gl/PR9Nfu

US Olympic Men's Bobsled Team Announced, Featuring Olympic Medalists And Army Veterans - ow.ly/SDtX30hNmfk

Vermont: Service Dog Helps Killington Veterans With PTSD - ow.ly/GPe430hNma9

Oklahoma City facility opens new military mental health unit - goo.gl/alerts/Hj9Ee

VA publicly releases opiate prescribing rates for all its hospitals for the first time usat.ly/2D1ZnBt

Marine Corps League assists fellow Veterans , community ow.ly/uDcQ30hLNBd

From: Hutton, James
Sent: 8 Dec 2017 07:14:19 -0800
To: Hutton, James
Subject: ICYMI - December 8, 2017

In Case You Missed It:

Below are Tweets sent this week with news links about #Veterans and links to Video/Audio products.

Links from Tweets will lead to full web articles for each posting.

James Hutton
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave, NW
Washington, D.C. 20420
Office: 202-461-7558
Email: james.hutton@va.gov
Twitter: [@jehutton](https://twitter.com/jehutton)

Twitter: [@jehutton](https://twitter.com/jehutton)

Statement by VA Secretary Shulkin - Homeless Funding -- "There will be absolutely no change in the funding to support our homeless programs."
goo.gl/PG1Jbs

VA News Release: Navajo Code Talker, Marine Veteran George B. Willie Sr. remembered for heroic service to the nation goo.gl/2xVbft

VA Blog: Google uses VA expertise to help individuals identify signs of PTSD goo.gl/5Xz86A

Yorktown WWII Veteran to celebrate 75th wedding anniversary, wife's 100th birthday goo.gl/JoJ7pW

VA Blog: VA exploring alternative treatments for TBI and PTSD goo.gl/XrdEPz

Washington Examiner: VA, Humane Society partner to help Veterans goo.gl/bwFbYL

VA issues warning to Veterans about refinancing scams goo.gl/zwJsJS

Missouri: Greene County Veterans Court honors World War II Veteran goo.gl/KMHP8h

Fox News 15: New non-profit aims to get service dogs to Veterans in need goo.gl/52qbmu

New Kansas City brewery 'founded by Veterans to honor heroes' goo.gl/bpBpBX

Central Mass. Veterans mobilize to help families for holidays goo.gl/W5KU2o

Helping homeless Veterans in Central Oregon goo.gl/QDTTtQ

An Unusual Treatment For Veterans' PTSD: Performing Shakespeare goo.gl/gZ34AX

World War II Veterans Get Trip Of A Lifetime From Gary Sinise goo.gl/XLMXym

Pendleton Air Museum, Veterans recall Pearl Harbor goo.gl/6LeyTf

VA Blog: Philippine Scout, Army Veteran shares story of how his escape from Bataan Death March goo.gl/UGRqbG

VA Blog: Gold star mother helps heal once-homeless Veterans by giving back goo.gl/xewvvG

VA Podcast: Benefits Breakdown – Homeless Veterans Outreach and Communications goo.gl/BrRGGS

Rutgers Veterans MBA program repurposes military skills for the business world goo.gl/cvWz35

VA Blog: Women Marines honored during National Inspirational Role Models Month goo.gl/yRkMWC

Guitars for Heroes Program Has Helped More than 500 Veterans Heal Through Music goo.gl/18JYAc

VA Blog: Modernizing VA to better serve Veterans goo.gl/h3mgui

VA News Release: VA and Humane Society of United States Announce Partnership goo.gl/nFpoJz

Texas: Veterans advocate killed in traffic crash laid to rest goo.gl/WpL1tJ

VA News Release: VA Announces Formation of Veterans and Community Oversight and Engagement Board Advisory Committee for Los Angeles Area goo.gl/gAASpH

'StandDowns' Help Connect Veterans To Help Other Veterans goo.gl/Z4NSyV

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing helps Veterans in recovery goo.gl/MN3oQE

VA Blog: VA seeks partnerships to build and improve health-care facilities to better serve Veterans goo.gl/xVG2Eu

VA Blog: VA using simple fix to improve E.R. visits goo.gl/tvdSvY

VA Blog: Native American Veterans find a pathway from homelessness with HUD-VA program goo.gl/CbxcdV

VA Blog: Benefits Breakdown – Homeless Veterans Outreach and Communications goo.gl/GhJs5T

Wounded Warrior Project volunteers focus on Veterans' headstones ow.ly/Yx2D30h1sHq

Three from New Haven area inducted into Connecticut's Veterans Hall of Fame ow.ly/TO3k30h1sCW

San Diego to face Army in the Armed Forces Bowl goo.gl/5q1ePW

Army honors 6 Soldiers who rescued crew in helicopter fire goo.gl/1hK6zp

Virginia to face Navy in Military Bowl with 'a fantastic storyline' goo.gl/sZGohB

University of Guam graduate students create project to help Guam Veterans goo.gl/EWPxmm

University of Colorado program connects student Veterans to industry professionals goo.gl/7P2vkw

Oklahoma: Military Veterans help Veteran displaced by Muskogee fire ow.ly/phnF30gYQs5

It's not a job, it's a mission: Veterans Crisis Line in Topeka looking to hire responders ow.ly/CWPH30gYQpy

Illinois: Veterans art exhibit has mission behind it ow.ly/xKoR30gYQnh

'They've done so much for us': Volunteers furnish Veterans' apartments ow.ly/JiHi30gYQjx

VA Blog: Serve visually impaired Veterans as a VA optometrist goo.gl/bWXjJh

Marine Veteran opens brewing company to help other Veterans ow.ly/Fx9S30gYDs5

VA Blog: Veteran credits VA with not only saving his life, but also his caregiver's life
goo.gl/NjKqxF

From: Leinenkugel, Jake
Sent: 13 Nov 2017 19:57:26 +0000
To: Selnick, Darin;Ulliot, John;Ulliot, John;Tucker, Brooks;O'Rourke, Peter M.;Shelby, Peter J.;Davis, Lynda;Sandoval, Camilo J.
Subject: FW: [EXTERNAL] 13 November Veterans Affairs Media Summary and News Clips
Attachments: 171113_Veterans Affairs Media Summary and News Clips.docx, 171113_Veterans Affairs Media Summary and News Clips.pdf

8.2 clearly shows need for “true” Choice and Tri-Care eligibility rules vs. VA clinical. Also nobody trusts VA wait time data. Must be independent as a proof point. Backlogs need new definition as not all claims are the same.....reclassify those that add-on new claims and those being chronically appealed. Again, hire all veterans to process or consider outsourcing.

Sent with Good (www.good.com)

From: VA Media Analysis
Sent: Monday, November 13, 2017 2:16:28 AM
To: VA Media Analysis
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 13 November Veterans Affairs Media Summary and News Clips

Good morning,

Please find the attached Veterans Affairs Media Summary and News Clips.

.....
BARBARICUM



Veterans Affairs Media Summary and News Clips

13 November 2017

1. [Top Stories](#)

1.1 - Cincinnati Enquirer (Video): [What is post-traumatic stress disorder? How can I help someone who has it?](#) (12 November, Keith BeiryGolick, 3.9M online visitors/mo; Cincinnati, OH)

PTSD is a mental health disorder that occurs in some people who go through traumatic events and are not able to process them afterward. About 8 million adults suffer from PTSD during a given year, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. This is only a small portion of those who have gone through a trauma. Dr. Kathleen Chard is a nationally recognized expert on the mental disorder. She directs the VA's Trauma Recovery Center.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

1.2 - Springfield News-Leader (Video): [VA doctor: I want you to see the health care system I do](#) (12 November, Megha Garg, 859k online visitors/mo; Springfield, MO)

When I share with someone that I work at the Veterans Health Administration, I often get one of two responses: "Oh, I've heard the care isn't that good there." Or, "What's the latest on the scandal going on at the VA?" Perhaps this is the inevitable conclusion for someone only reading news headlines about the Department of Veterans Affairs...

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

1.3 - WGN (CMN-720, Audio): [Dr. David Shulkin, U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs: Increasing Service and Accountability, Bringing the Number of Veteran Suicides to Zero](#) (12 November, 162k online visitors/mo; Chicago, IL)

As we pay tribute to the many brave generations who have served our country, we'll discuss how we are taking care of our veterans and their families as Dave Plier welcomes Dr. David Shulkin, US Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

2. [Greater Choice for Veterans](#)

2.1 - Gainesville Sun: [Malcom Randall VA Medical Center drops in rating, lab on probation](#) (12 November, Paige Fry, 440k online visitors/mo; Gainesville, FL)

The Malcom Randall VA Medical Center dropped lower in national ratings — from a three to a two on a five-point scale — partly due to patients dying there from pneumonia and sepsis. The Gainesville hospital has about 370 vacancies, ranging from housekeepers to physicians and nurses, which union president Muriel Newman said has been causing severe problems.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

2.2 - Times-News: [Reader Comment: Honoring veterans by effectively supporting their service](#) (12 November, Sen. Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), 201k online visitors/mo; Twin Falls, ID)

Veterans Day — a day to honor veterans for their service to our nation — is a good time to take stock of where we are in ensuring that they have access to quality health care and other services that support their enduring commitment. So far this year, Congress has passed and

President Trump has signed into law the following important veterans-related legislation that I supported:

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

2.3 - Mankato Free Press: [In Crossfire Rural vets in midst of health care debate, Lawmakers try to fix Choice Program](#) (12 November, May Rao, 192k online visitors/mo; Mankato, MN)

When Phil Klenk injured himself with a shovel during yard work, his wife, Lisa, drove him more than an hour from their home in Winthrop to the VA hospital in Minneapolis for urgent care. It wasn't supposed to work that way. Both veterans, the Klenks had high hopes for a federal program that promised an easier way for rural service members to receive medical treatment close to home.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

2.4 - Panama City News Herald: [OUR VIEW: Veterans need to be helped](#) (12 November, Editorial Board, 189k online visitors/mo; Panama City, FL)

Trump has done more than mouth off, working with Congress to better serve roughly 18.5 million American veterans. This past weekend, Americans celebrated Veterans Day, honoring the brave men and women in uniform who have served their country — in many cases, risking their lives on the battlefield — to defend our nation and its freedoms.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

2.5 - WBIW (AM-1340): [Donnelly Announces Support for Bipartisan Legislation to Help Prevent Overmedication Of Veterans](#) (13 November, 57k online visitors/mo; Bedford, IN)

The Veterans Overmedication Prevention Act, introduced by the Chairman of the Armed Services Committee, Senator John McCain (R-AZ), would commission an independent review of the deaths of veterans who died by suicide or drug overdose over the last five years while receiving care through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and an assessment of the role that prescription medications may have played.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

2.6 - Tampa Bay Reporter: [Bilirakis Seeks To Expand Dental Care For Veterans](#) (12 November, 17k online visitors/mo; Tampa, FL)

U.S. Rep. Gus Bilirakis, R-Tarpon Springs, is sponsoring a bill that's designed to expand access to dental care for veterans. The bill, called the Veterans Early Treatment for Chronic Ailment Resurgence through Examinations Act, arose because of conversations Bilirakis had with veterans while co-hosting the Stars, Stripes and Smiles event each year, to provide dental care to 75 veterans at no cost.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

3. [Modernize Our System](#)

4. [Focus Resources More Efficiently](#)

4.1 - The Register-Herald: [Raleigh County Veterans Court helps vets get their lives back on track](#) (12 November, Wendy Holdren, 77k online visitors/mo; Beckley, WV)

In an office outside Judge Andrew Dimlich's chambers on the bottom floor of the Raleigh County Judicial Annex, nine men and women in professional attire sit at a boardroom table. At the center of the table, among their legal pads and coffee cups, is a landline telephone dialed into the Martinsburg VA Medical Center.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

4.2 - Flyer Group: [Cascade students honor veterans](#) (12 November, Abigail Church, 46k online visitors/mo; Avon, IN)

Cascade High School's AP Government class recently visited the Richard Roudebush V.A. Medical Center in Indianapolis to deliver more than 1,300 basic supplies and toiletries donated to U.S. veterans. Each year CHS has a Veterans' Day program honoring veterans, but also hosts a school-wide project to give back to the veterans in the community.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

5. [Improve Timeliness of Service](#)

5.1 - WCMH (NBC-4, Video): [Sprayed and betrayed: Veterans exposed to Agent Orange feel abandoned by VA](#) (12 November, 1.1M online visitors/mo; Columbus, OH)

Veterans descended on Bay Pines VA Medical Center in Florida Thursday to protest what they're calling discrimination. "Our country sent us to war and we expected them to take care of us, and they won't do it," said Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veteran Mike Kvintus.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

5.2 - Standard-Examiner: [Veterans' Hospital takes wellness approach to combat veteran health problems](#) (12 November, Elizabeth Quinn, 803k online visitors/mo; Ogden, UT)

Opioid addiction, heart disease and post-traumatic stress disorder are some of the most common health issues among veterans, and Truman Veterans' Hospital is increasingly finding that the path to recovery for veterans is through wellness. The veterans hospital has been doing wellness for five years. But last year, it brought together the pieces, formalized its efforts and named it the Integrative Health and Wellness Program.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

5.3 - KSWB (FOX-5, Video): [Army veteran's outcry led to major changes at VA hospital](#) (12 November, Phil Blauer, 442k online visitors/mo; San Diego, CA)

Army Veteran Chad Cavanaugh is thrilled to be standing tall and pain-free. A year ago, the 44-year-old married father of three's life was much different. His 6-feet, 5-inches tall frame was stuck in a wheelchair and he blamed inefficiency at the San Diego VA hospital in La Jolla for his condition.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

5.4 - Foster's Daily Democrat: [Providing a PATH for veterans](#) (12 November, Lara Bricker, 191k online visitors/mo; Dover, NH)

Northeast Passage's PATH is a community/home based recreational therapy program available to veterans with disabling conditions who are served through the Manchester Veteran's Administration. Though PATH has been in existence since 1998, the VA will now pay for New Hampshire veterans to receive recreational therapy treatment through its Choice program, said Jill Gravnik, founder and executive director of Northeast Passage.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

5.5 - Independent Florida Alligator: [Pro-cannabis veterans protest opioids outside VA hospital, The group carried a casket full of pill bottles across Archer Road](#) (13 November, David Hoffman, 63k online visitors/mo; Gainesville, FL)

The veterans marched across the intersection of Southwest Archer Road and Center Drive carrying a casket draped in an American flag. At the front lawn outside the hospital, the group then folded the flag and poured hundreds of empty pill bottles inside the open casket. Joshua Littrell, a protest organizer and the founder of the nonprofit Veterans for Cannabis, said the demonstration was meant to show how deadly opioids are.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

5.6 - KBCS (FM-91.3, Audio): [Navigating the Department of Veterans Affairs as a Transgender Veteran](#) (11 November, Yuko Kodama and Ruth Bly, 1.1k online visitors/day; Bellevue, WA)

A federal judge has placed a temporary stay on President Trump's ban on transgender soldiers. Meanwhile, transgender veterans struggle to navigate for appropriate healthcare through the Department of Veterans Affairs. KBCS's Yuko Kodama spoke with transgender U.S. army veteran Brooke Wylie about her experiences in advocating for services.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

6. [Suicide Prevention](#)

6.1 - Daily Herald: [Vietnam veteran's mission: Saving my brothers from their demons](#) (12 November, Marie Wilson, 1.5M online visitors/mo; Arlington Heights, IL)

Now Atkinson feels driven -- driven to prevent veterans from ending their lives by providing connections to the Veterans Crisis Line. The line, established in 2007, receives 250,000 calls each year nationwide and helps veterans with anything causing a crisis in the immediate moment, be it thoughts of suicide, a family problem, an urgent home repair or a financial emergency.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

6.2 - Lake News: [OUR VIEW -- The hardest fought battle can be at home](#) (11 November, Editorial Board, 45k online visitors/mo; Camdenton, MO)

Suicide rates among U.S. veterans are staggering. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs reported that in 2016 approximately 20 suicides among veterans were recorded each day. Some advocacy groups now place that number at 22 each day. A comprehensive study released in 2017 reported that the suicide rate among middle-age and older adult veterans remains high. In 2014, approximately 65 percent of all veterans who died by suicide were age 50 or older.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

7. Women Veterans / Homelessness / Benefits / Cemeteries

7.1 - FOX News (AP): [Rhode Island opens state-of-the-art home for veterans](#) (11

November, 32.5M online visitors/mo; New York, NY)

Rhode Island has unveiled a new, state-of-the-art home for veterans on Veterans Day. Democratic Gov. Gina Raimondo hosted the state's Veterans Day ceremony and a traditional ribbon cutting Saturday at the home in Bristol, Rhode Island. Veterans began moving in last week, prior to the ceremony, and completed the move earlier this week.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

7.2 - WWL (CBS-4, Video): [Community feeds homeless veterans on Veterans Day](#) (11

November, Katie Steiner, 863k online visitors/mo; New Orleans, LA)

For many Americans, Saturday was a day to honor our veterans, those on active duty and who have served in the past. A group of community members gathered together to make sure that one group of veterans was taken care of. Veterans Day at the Veterans Affairs Medical Center means a lot of classic Louisiana food. Delicious food going into the stomachs of U.S. Military veterans.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

7.3 - Observer-Dispatch: [Homeless veterans declining or growing?](#) (12 November, Amy

Neff Roth, 305k online visitors/mo; Utica, NY)

On Friday, the day before Veterans Day, a homeless veteran showed up at the Central New York Veterans Outreach Center in Utica. The man had been to the Rescue Mission of Utica, but its shelter was full, he told workers at the outreach center. So the center's case managers went to work, arranging a bed for the weekend and searching for a longer-term solution.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

7.4 - Times Telegram: [New bill would expand veterans' burial benefits](#) (12 November, Greg

Mason, 44k online visitors/mo; Herkimer, NY)

The bill would expand VA burial benefits. For those who are cremated and laid to rest in a nontraditional resting place, the bill would require the VA to offer either a commemorative urn or a plaque to families, according to Tenney's office.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

8. Other

8.1 - The Washington Post: [Veteran who lost both legs completes 31 marathons in 31 days, runners trailing his every step](#) (12 November, Kelyn Soong, 43.9M online visitors/mo;

Washington, DC)

Marine Corps veteran Rob Jones wanted to change the narrative of the broken-down, wounded veteran struggling to transition to civilian life. So for the past 31 days, he kept running. He ran to prove a point and to inspire. Jones, who had both legs amputated after being wounded by a

land mine while serving in Afghanistan, ran the distance of 31 marathons over 31 days in 31 different cities.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

8.2 - Bustle: [6 Things Trump Promised Veterans He'd Change — But Hasn't](#) (12 November, Morgan Brinlee, 16.3M online visitors/mo; New York, NY)

Days before Veterans Day on Nov. 11, the White House released a statement in which President Donald Trump claimed "tremendous progress has been made in a short period of time" regarding his administration's efforts to reform the Department of Veteran Affairs and better support veterans. But some have argued the president's claims about progress are a bit overblown, given the promises Trump has made to veterans that have yet to be fulfilled.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

[Back to Top](#)

1. [Top Stories](#)

1.1 - Cincinnati Enquirer (Video): [What is post-traumatic stress disorder? How can I help someone who has it?](#) (12 November, Keith BeiryGolick, 3.9M online visitors/mo; Cincinnati, OH)

PTSD is a mental health disorder that occurs in some people who go through traumatic events and are not able to process them afterward.

About 8 million adults suffer from PTSD during a given year, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. This is only a small portion of those who have gone through a trauma.

Dr. Kathleen Chard is a nationally recognized expert on the mental disorder. She directs the VA's Trauma Recovery Center.

She spoke with The Enquirer to answer some frequently-asked questions and dispel some myths about the mental health disorder.

Did you know?

- You don't have to talk about the trauma to get better. There are treatment programs out there, including right here in Cincinnati, where you never have to talk about the traumatic event.
- There also are programs that allow significant others to attend with you.
- The effects of PTSD can be delayed.
- Most people see improvement in five to 15 sessions of weekly therapy.

What are the symptoms?

- An estimated 7.8 percent of Americans will experience PTSD at some point in their lives, with women being twice as likely as men to develop PTSD. Here is an explanation of the definition and the symptoms of PTSD. USA TODAY
- Nightmares and daymares. Re-experiencing the trauma as if it was unfolding in front you.
- A heightened sense of arousal. You may feel danger even when none is present. It can be triggered by a sight, smell or sound.
- Change in thoughts and feeling. Emotions become restricted, and everything can become black and white. No one can be trusted and it becomes difficult to make new friends or even to trust yourself.
- You stay away from anything that reminds you of the trauma.

What do I do if someone I know has PTSD, but doesn't want help?

- 1-800-273-8255. That's the number for the national Veterans Crisis Line. It's open to civilians, veterans and family members. The number to text is 838-255.
- Don't judge what they did, or how they responded. Positive social support is one of the biggest things friends and family can do.

- Learn about PTSD so you can help.
- Make it OK to get care.
- The National Center for PTSD has videos of actual patients talking about going through treatment. The VA also has apps for your phone that can be helpful.

[Hyperlink to Above](#)

1.2 - Springfield News-Leader (Video): [VA doctor: I want you to see the health care system I do](#) (12 November, Megha Garg, 859k online visitors/mo; Springfield, MO)

When I share with someone that I work at the Veterans Health Administration, I often get one of two responses: "Oh, I've heard the care isn't that good there." Or, "What's the latest on the scandal going on at the VA?"

Perhaps this is the inevitable conclusion for someone only reading news headlines about the Department of Veterans Affairs, but I am honored to be a VA doctor. The other day, I was in a Lyft car (I am writing from San Francisco, after all.) chatting with the driver when I mentioned I work at the VA. He immediately opened up and shared that he was an Iraq War veteran and told me all about his primary care doctor at the VA and the support he received as he transitioned back to civilian life. He thanked me for my service to the veterans. I thanked him for his service to our country. This is the VA that I know, the VA that our country should be proud of.

There are many reasons to take pride in the VA:

- It has been a leader in research and discovery for decades — for example, cardiac pacemakers and CT scan technology were pioneered at the VA.
- VA hospitals are an integral component of teaching at prestigious academic medical centers. More than 40,000 medical residents and 20,000 medical students, myself included, receive training at a VA hospital each year.
- My VA hospital has a strong affiliation with the University of California-San Francisco, one of the top medical schools in the country. It should be no surprise then, that the VA's clinical care is on par with or better than our counterparts. A recent large meta analysis done by the RAND Corporation showed that the VA often performs better than or similarly to other systems of care with regards to safety and effectiveness of care.

As a VA doctor, I work in the largest integrated health system in the nation. I take care of patients in a system that allows me to access a patient's electronic medical record across specialties and VA clinical sites nationwide. At the VA, I can access a patient's previous doctors' visits with just a few clicks, and directly instant message or email his VA providers with questions because we are all on the same computer network.

In a non-integrated system, this process entails wasted time on hold with various offices, unread faxes or, worse, no attempt to obtain old information at all.

One final point about quality of care: One of the most frustrating aspects of being a doctor is not being able to solve the social problems of my patients. The VA gives me more options to tackle this than other systems. The VA can provide special resources to our population, which I learn

about all the time from our social workers and nurse care coordinators. Just the other day, I was able to discharge a patient to the Metropolitan Fresh Start House, which provides homeless veterans with substance addiction the housing, food and structured recovery program they need.

Nevertheless, there have been real access issues at the VA, highlighted by the Arizona appointment scandal in 2014. In response, Congress passed Veterans CHOICE, a program that allows veterans who live more than 40 miles from a VA, or who are unable to get an appointment within 30 days, to obtain care with a non-VA provider.

Additionally, the VA has increased transparency of wait times for appointments — something that many other public and private hospitals have yet to do. There is promise in this new system, but CHOICE won't solve all access issues. Our patients face a shortage of all doctors, not just VA doctors, especially in rural communities.

My job reminds me every day of the sacrifices made by the men and women who have served us in the military. There is a sense of gratitude and mission unique to this special population. We all feel it, from the patients to their families to the doctors and staff.

It is my hope that as CHOICE evolves and people learn more about the VA system, the headlines will also start to reflect the VA that I know.

Megha Garg is an internal medicine physician at the San Francisco VA Medical Center and an assistant professor at the University of California, San Francisco School of Medicine.

[Back to Top](#)

1.3 - WGN (CMN-720, Audio): [Dr. David Shulkin, U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs: Increasing Service and Accountability, Bringing the Number of Veteran Suicides to Zero](#) (12 November, 162k online visitors/mo; Chicago, IL)

As we pay tribute to the many brave generations who have served our country, we'll discuss how we are taking care of our veterans and their families as Dave Plier welcomes Dr. David Shulkin, US Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

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[2. Greater Choice for Veterans](#)

2.1 - Gainesville Sun: [Malcom Randall VA Medical Center drops in rating, lab on probation](#) (12 November, Paige Fry, 440k online visitors/mo; Gainesville, FL)

Infections, mortality and staffing cited as administrators work to correct problems.

The Malcom Randall VA Medical Center dropped lower in national ratings — from a three to a two on a five-point scale — partly due to patients dying there from pneumonia and sepsis.

The Gainesville hospital has about 370 vacancies, ranging from housekeepers to physicians and nurses, which union president Muriel Newman said has been causing severe problems.

Its laboratory, producing test results crucial to diagnoses, was put on probation due to staffing concerns and lack of technical oversight.

When U.S. Navy veteran Russell Gault stayed in the hospital during one of his bipolar mood episodes in 2016, he said the shower leaked onto the floor, seeping into his room, forcing him to dry the floor on his hands and knees.

He was denied a washcloth for days because nurses said the hospital didn't have any. Gault said he observed employees not working throughout the day. But while he slept, a nurse yelled into his room to wake him up.

"I was mad as hell at these people," Gault said. "Even civilians aren't treated this way."
Good and the bad
The good:

Overall job satisfaction — Employees rated the hospital at 69 on a 100-point scale, which matches the benchmark and is at the 90th percentile mark among all VA hospitals.

Satisfaction with the VA — Employees rated the hospital at 3.9 on a 5-point scale, on par with the benchmark and above the 50th percentile among all VA hospitals.

A good place to work — Employees rated the hospital at 3.8 on a 5-point scale, on par with the benchmark and at the 90th percentil among all VA hospitals.

Problem areas:

In-hospital mortality — Higher than expected rate of patients who die in acute care wards.

30-day mortality — Higher than expected rate of patients who die within 30 days of being admitted to acute care wards, particularly from heart attacks, congestive heart failure and pneumonia.

Patient safety — the potential for in-hospital complications and adverse events following surgeries and procedures.

Readmission for AMI — The rate of patients admitted with an acute myocardial infarction (heart attack) who return to the hospital within 30 days.

Rating of primary care providers — Patients rated their primary care providers — doctors, physicians' assistants and nurse practitioners — at 66 on a 100-point scale. The benchmark is 76.

The VA rates about 140 of its hospitals using its Strategic Analytics for Improvement and Learning scale, which measures hospitals from one star, at the worst, to five stars, at the best. Malcom Randall dropped from a three to a two in the most recent evaluation, released last month, making it one of worst in Florida and in the bottom third nationwide.

The rating comes from a list of measurements such as mortality ratio, in-hospital complications, length of stay and call-center speed.

Thomas Wisnieski, who oversees Malcom Randall as director of veterans health systems in North Florida and South Georgia, said the hospital here is an outlier for in-hospital pneumonia and sepsis, a life-threatening illness caused by the body's response to an infection.

Dr. Bradley Bender, chief of staff, said for pneumonia, the hospital found that patients too often were lying on their backs when vomiting. So now, they've been more diligent at making sure the patients sit up. That and other small changes have reduced the rate of in-hospital pneumonia by 50 percent.

Bender said employees had problems operating the hospital's electronic medical record, which tracks what has been done for a patient or what a doctor orders. So they've implemented a new system that's more user-friendly so nurses, doctors and pharmacists aren't confused about what a patient needs.

"There's never any magic solution for anything," he said.

Hospital spokesman Daniel Henry said a project is also underway to standardize diagnosis and treatment for sepsis.

Muriel Newman, the union president who used to work in the hospital's lab, said in-hospital sepsis is caused by people not washing their hands or unclean rooms and tools.

"How clean is that place if we're passing patients sepsis?" she said. "It's frightening."

Wisnieski also said the hospital had issues with mental-health counseling, length of stay and call-center response time, which the hospital was scored as more than a minute over the VA's benchmark.

The hospital hired someone to investigate the statistics to figure out improvements, Wisnieski said.

"These are rolling numbers," Bender said. "If we do a change, sometimes it takes a year before we actually get improvements."

In a hospital of about 3,000 employees, 370 vacant positions make a difference.

Newman, the union president, has worked in the hospital since 2002. She said the level of care has dropped since director Wisnieski took over, mostly because medical teams are incomplete and employees are overworked.

"They're not even posting all the vacancies," she said, noting the USA Jobs website lists fewer than 25 positions available at the VA in Gainesville.

The Sun tried to reach out to some employees about this, but Newman said employees can face discipline for speaking to the media.

Wisnieski said the vacancies include doctors, nurses, housekeeping, psychologists, nutrition and food service employees, to name a few.

"In health care, you could always use more," he said.

He said they have a turnover rate of 6.96 percent, due to employees retiring or leaving, which is lower than the VA's average of 7.64 percent.

Hospital spokesman Daniel Henry said the hospital added 28 physicians and had a net increase of 93 positions in fiscal year 2017.

Some of the difficulty with hiring qualified people is due to the competition in the area, Wisnieski said. They have contracted out some of the work and use overtime.

However, Newman said more people are leaving than being hired. And employees are burning out as they work overtime and face disciplinary action for conditions caused by lack of help. "We're trying to cut corners," she said. "Employees here have just been battered along due to staffing issues."

The College of American Pathologists accredits more than 8,000 laboratories. Only 18 have been put on probation this year. Malcom Randall is one of them.

On July 26, the group stated the VA's lab was on probation due to "concern with regard to the staffing in the laboratory" and "lack of technical oversight in the laboratory," according to the letter obtained by The Sun.

Paul Bachner, chair of the CAP Accreditation Committee, couldn't comment specifically on the hospital but said "being put on probation is a significant event for a laboratory" and happens rarely.

The group will do a random evaluation by the end of this year and if the lab doesn't pass, it will lose its accreditation.

Wisnieski said the lab didn't have any issue with the quality of care, but the problems fell on lab administration and policies being out of date. Due to employee privacy reasons, he couldn't comment on which individuals were causing a problem but said changes were made.

Newman, who used to work in the hospital's lab, said about 80 percent of diagnostics come from the lab, so if it's shut down, the hospital will have to quickly find new accreditation or appeal the decision. Otherwise, it will have to use another lab.

"Those of us who have been here are just stunned at what's happening," Newman said.

When U.S. Navy veteran Russell Gault checked into Malcom Randall's mental health care unit in May 2016, he didn't expect it to make his bipolar symptoms worse.

The 59-year-old voluntarily checked himself in when he felt his mental illness kick up and went in for help. He said for the 12 days he was in the hospital, from May 5-17, 2016, the nurses

were unable to provide him with a washcloth, his shower spilled water onto the floor and employees gave incompetent help.

"They treat people like animals," he said. "It's an absolute joke."

He stayed in the hospital's Bed Tower, a building about 3 years old, in room 517. He wrote a letter about his stay and handed it out to people in the hospital after trying to reach out to hospital administration and receiving no response.

In the letter, he mentioned staff members who didn't work and one who yelled into his room at 1 a.m., waking him up.

Bender, the hospital chief of staff, said there was an issue with the veteran receiving a washcloth, but the data doesn't "reflect it was 12 days he didn't have a washcloth." He acknowledged the showers didn't drain properly but said they have been fixed. He said hospital officials tried to reach Gault, but couldn't locate him.

A U.S. Coast Guard veteran who stayed at the hospital the same time as Gault also said he didn't receive any washcloths during his three weeks of care. He declined to give his name due to privacy concerns.

"I wish the VA could do a little better," he said.

Wisnieski said he was aware of the complaints made about the employees and said actions have been taken, but declined to go into specifics due to employee privacy laws.

Gault, however, said he was so tired of the VA's care that he moved to Long Beach, California, as soon as he could. The difference in the California VA's care is "night and day."

Bender said he encourages patient complaints.

"We want to know," he said. "We want to be able to fix things."

Cory Wipke, a 45-year-old U.S. Army veteran, said he's visited the VA hospital for several issues including his insomnia, shingles and vertigo.

Every time he visits he said the wait time is at least two hours, sometimes stretching to seven hours.

"I hate it," he said. "Nobody likes going there."

Despite complaints, Wisnieski said the hospital is trying to be transparent and make those corrections to serve the people who served this country.

"It's our right and privilege to provide them with exceptional health care," he said. "That's what we strive to do."

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2.2 - Times-News: [Reader Comment: Honoring veterans by effectively supporting their service](#) (12 November, Sen. Mike Crapo (R-Idaho), 201k online visitors/mo; Twin Falls, ID)

Veterans Day — a day to honor veterans for their service to our nation — is a good time to take stock of where we are in ensuring that they have access to quality health care and other services that support their enduring commitment. So far this year, Congress has passed and President Trump has signed into law the following important veterans-related legislation that I supported:

The Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 overhauls the current U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs appeals process and replaces it with a new multi-track system to ensure veterans and their families receive timelier decisions on essential benefits provided by the VA. I co-sponsored this legislation, as Idaho veterans have shared detailed personal accounts of how the VA claims appeals process could better serve veterans.

The VA Choice and Quality Employment Act of 2017 provides resources to keep the Veterans Choice Program running; authorizes various veterans home leases; and makes improvements to certain hiring and personnel-management practices at the VA. Earlier this year, similar legislation was enacted that extends the sunset date for the Choice program through January 2018; makes the VA the primary payer for all care through the Choice program; and contains provisions to improve records-keeping for veterans who use the Choice program. Neither of these laws fix all the problems with the Choice program; Idaho veterans and their family members have made clear that it does not work for Idahoans. Rather, this extension helps ensure that veterans dependent on the Choice program are not left in the lurch while work continues to address the problems — including cumbersome eligibility requirements and payment delays.

The Harry W. Colmery Veterans Education Assistance Act enacts a variety of improvements to eligibility for and utilization of veterans' educational assistance (GI Bill) benefits. The law includes legislation — known as the Shauna Hill Post-9/11 Education Benefits Transferability Act — introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives by Rep. Raúl Labrador, R-Idaho. I joined Sen. Jim Risch, R-Idaho, in introducing the companion legislation in the Senate. This provision, named for Idahoan Shauna Hill who was killed in an automobile accident, enables veterans to reassign educational benefits in the event the original recipient dies.

This is not a comprehensive list, but rather highlights of what Congress has been able to accomplish for veterans so far this year. I also continue to work with veterans and the VA directly to address individual issues through casework — which has resulted in the return of \$2.1 million in claims and medical benefits to Idaho veterans from the VA so far this year. If you find yourself in need of assistance with a specific agency, please contact staff in one of my regional offices to discuss your situation. Contact information, the required privacy release form and frequently asked questions can be accessed through my official website at www.crapo.senate.gov.

Despite progress, we definitely have more to do to ensure that federal policy is increasingly responsive to Idaho veterans and their needs. I introduced SB1279 — the Veterans Health Administration Reform Act of 2017 — to address concerns raised by Idaho veterans with the Veterans Choice Program. These efforts will improve this program and make it easier for Idaho veterans to access care. I look forward to working to enact this and other pending legislation to improve veterans programs.

The input of Idaho veterans and learning from their experiences have guided my support for veterans-related legislation and policy changes. Please keep sharing your insights as work continues to ensure our nation effectively supports the service of our nation's veterans every Veterans Day.

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2.3 - Mankato Free Press: [In Crossfire Rural vets in midst of health care debate, Lawmakers try to fix Choice Program](#) (12 November, May Rao, 192k online visitors/mo; Mankato, MN)

When Phil Klenk injured himself with a shovel during yard work, his wife, Lisa, drove him more than an hour from their home in Winthrop to the VA hospital in Minneapolis for urgent care.

It wasn't supposed to work that way. Both veterans, the Klenks had high hopes for a federal program that promised an easier way for rural service members to receive medical treatment close to home.

But Lisa Klenk, the veterans service officer for Sibley County, quickly found the Veterans Choice Program to be so bureaucratic and slow-moving — it took her 21/2 months to get a physical therapy appointment near home — that she's reverted to visiting VA hospitals in Minneapolis and St. Cloud, 75 miles away.

"Even though it's an hour and 10 minute drive, it's quicker for me to go there than to go to my local choice program," Lisa Klenk said.

Three years after the Veterans Choice Program began, federal lawmakers are racing to overhaul the troubled multibillion-dollar effort before it runs out of money. That could happen as early as December, following the approval of \$2.1 billion in emergency funding in August.

Stakes are high for elected officials, including President Trump, who repeatedly promised as a candidate that veterans would get better treatment than under the previous administration. In an Op-Ed in The Hill to honor Veterans Day, Secretary of Veterans Affairs David Shulkin noted he was working with Congress on a replacement called the CARE Act as part of a series of reforms at the agency.

At least a third of the people enrolled in the VA health care system live in rural areas and are more likely to be older and face medical problems that require costlier care.

"It's pretty hard to find a veteran who's happy with the way the Choice Program is working," said U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan, D-Minn., whose sprawling, largely rural northeastern Minnesota district faces the very challenges that the program was supposed to address. "Just colossal administrative snafus and delays and problems have been associated with (it)."

Nolan said he has a neighbor who tried for two years to get an appointment to be treated for a neck injury that the VA system couldn't handle in-house. The congressman recently attended a gathering of about 100 veterans in International Falls to talk about a solution.

"Every time I've had to deal with Veterans Choice there's been a problem," disabled veteran Joe Buzay told the group. "I've spent hours on the phone talking to them, trying to get things straightened out."

Buzay drew applause when he added: "Honestly, I'm glad to see it's going away."

Lawmakers approved the program in 2014, following a scandal over long wait times at the Phoenix VA. The program permits veterans who have to wait more than 30 days for treatment at a VA hospital or live more than 40 miles away to get care from private providers close by.

Members of Congress and Shulkin have been circulating replacement proposals. Shulkin is pushing a plan to allow veterans to seek private-sector care reimbursed by the VA if the government's facilities don't provide what they need, can't provide it in a timely way or don't meet quality metrics compared with community health providers. His proposal would go further than a congressional proposal that would have primary care VA doctors refer patients to a network of private providers when needed.

Shulkin told lawmakers at a hearing last month that streamlining the choice program with other community care programs would save billions over a decade, noting that 13 percent of the choice program's funding went toward "extremely high" administrative costs.

"I'm concerned with how it will be funded," said U.S. Rep. Tim Walz of Mankato, the senior Democrat on the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, during that hearing. "I continue to believe that veterans do not benefit when we scrape the barrel for money by skimming from some veteran benefits programs to pay for others."

The House proposal would be funded with discretionary funds subject to approval annually, according to Walz's office.

In the 1st District that Walz represents, Mayo Clinic is watching the debate closely; its leaders repeatedly have met with Shulkin in Washington to discuss veteran health care.

Minnesota's most prominent medical system drew some backlash for not participating in the Veterans Choice program, citing high administrative costs to comply. Providers "have to go through a number of hoops" to see veterans for an appointment and pass through many layers of bureaucracy to set up related tests, said Kathleen Harrington, who heads Mayo's division of policy and government relations. Mayo and other health care providers say the process involves excessive paperwork and extra staffing.

"It's just not very modern," Harrington said. "We're living in an age where time is very, very critical and the burdens slow things down, add additional costs and excessive time, defeating the purpose of getting veterans the care they need in a timely basis."

Mayo has yet to back a replacement program. Harrington said what they've seen so far lacks sufficient details.

At Rainy Lake Medical Center in International Falls, employees routinely discover errors in the authorizations provided by the Veterans Choice program administrator, according to Kris Foss, executive director of clinic operations. The staff finds dates aren't entered correctly, for example, or that veterans aren't aware that the program had approved their appointments until Rainy

Lake calls them. The medical center sometimes has to dial the program at 8 a.m. and wait on hold for five hours to clear up problems.

“With us being so remote, sometimes traveling to an appointment isn’t an option,” Foss said. “Having care close to them isn’t a convenience — for some of these veterans who have served our country ... it’s a necessity.”

St. Cloud-based CentraCare Health has had to wait as long as a year for VA reimbursements, according to system director Kathy Parsons, and has to fax or email medical records up to five times to program administrators. She praised the House proposal for mandating that more records be sent electronically and reimbursement go to private providers more quickly.

In her job as Sibley County veteran service officer, Klenk knows plenty of veterans face long waits at private providers nearby — undercutting the chief aim of a program meant to bring care to people who live more than 40 miles from a VA facility. She’s dealt with veterans contacted by collection agencies because of VA delays in reimbursing private providers.

The paperwork and bureaucracy are so extensive, Klenk said, “that we’re requiring (of) a veteran who served our country ... more than we are requiring of a Medicare patient, which is crazy. It boggles my mind.”

Last month Shulkin told lawmakers that the VA would “take back customer service.”

But he called on them to act soon, saying, “We need Congress to pass this legislation to avoid the program running out of money and to give veterans a system that works.”

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2.4 - Panama City News Herald: [OUR VIEW: Veterans need to be helped](#) (12 November, Editorial Board, 189k online visitors/mo; Panama City, FL)

Trump has done more than mouth off, working with Congress to better serve roughly 18.5 million American veterans.

This past weekend, Americans celebrated Veterans Day, honoring the brave men and women in uniform who have served their country — in many cases, risking their lives on the battlefield — to defend our nation and its freedoms.

President Donald Trump is in Vietnam at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum. Before embarking on his lengthy Asian trip, he declared November National Veterans and Military Families Month.

During his campaign for the presidency, Mr. Trump blasted the Department of Veterans Affairs for long delays in medical care encountered by veterans, branding it the “most corrupt” and “most incompetently run agency in the United States.” No president can solve all of the problems in an agency with limited resources and extraordinary challenges. But Trump has done more than mouth off in this case, working with Congress to better serve roughly 18.5 million American veterans.

David Shulkin, the secretary of Veterans Affairs, has started the process of improving services for veterans. In a Nov. 9 press release, he noted that “no fewer than five major pieces of legislation on a range of veterans issues” have been enacted this year, focusing on “accountability, whistleblower protection, choice in health care, educational benefits and appeals modernization.”

Working with the administration, Congress passed the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act, which provides faster claims service for veterans, and the Forever GI Bill, enhancing their educational benefits.

Congress also gave Shulkin increased powers to remove his employees in a much swifter manner if they have engaged in some form of misconduct, aided by the VA Office of Accountability and Whistleblower Protection. It is also weighing legislation that would enable Veterans Affairs to provide civil legal aid.

There are other ways veterans are being helped.

Washington’s firm commitment to maintaining low-interest rate VA loans, for example, has helped more veterans buy homes.

Rep. Al Lawson, D-Florida, wants to tackle the rarely-discussed problem of veteran hunger. He has enlisted congressional support for the extension of the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits to veterans who need food.

The “Pups for Patriots Act” is making its way through Congress. Sponsored by Representatives Gus Bilirakis, R-Florida, and Henry Cuellar, D-Texas, this legislation would provide training and service dogs for veterans who suffered from post-traumatic stress and/or traumatic brain injury. This important gesture is widely supported by both parties.

Ford Motor Company, meanwhile, is donating eight Flex utility vehicles to the department’s Transportation Network to help disabled veterans get to medical appointments, and Accuracy Incorporated, a radiation oncology company, has enhanced its radiation therapy systems to help veterans diagnosed with cancer.

These programs and innovations will help improve the quality of life for our veterans, and give them a chance to lead lives with dignity and pride. Those who have sacrificed greatly to protect us and preserve our freedoms deserve nothing less.

This editorial first appeared in the Providence Journal, a News Herald sister paper with GateHouse Media.

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2.5 - WBIW (AM-1340): [Donnelly Announces Support for Bipartisan Legislation to Help Prevent Overmedication Of Veterans](#) (13 November, 57k online visitors/mo; Bedford, IN)

(SOUTH BEND) - U.S. Senator Joe Donnelly announced his support for bipartisan legislation that aims to help protect against the overmedication of our nation’s veterans and prevent veteran suicide.